

# **SAN JOAQUIN RIVER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL**

April 1, 2004

Stanislaus County Agricultural Center  
Stanislaus Building Main Conference Room  
3800 Cornucopia Way  
Modesto, California

## **DRAFT AGENDA**

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions – Tim Ramirez, California Bay-Delta Authority  
Letters of Consistency Discussion
- 9:15 a.m. DWR/Prop 13 grant - summary of the currently funded efforts – Tim Ramirez, CBDA
- 9:45 a.m. California Bay-Delta Authority's San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning, California Water Plan Update, and SJRMP - Tim Ramirez, CBDA
- 10:30 a.m. Ag Waiver Status and Update – Pete Osmolovsky, Regional Water Quality Control Board
- 11:00 a.m. San Joaquin River Resource Management Coalition Upper SJR Comprehensive Restoration Plan -- Chris White, Central California ID
- 12:00 p.m. Other Business
- 12:15 p.m. Adjourn

# **SAN JOAQUIN RIVER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

April 1, 2004  
Stanislaus County Agricultural Center  
Modesto, California

### **Welcome and Introductions**

The San Joaquin River Management Program Advisory Council met at the Stanislaus County Agricultural Center in Modesto, California. There were no comments on the draft minutes of the September 10, 2003 meeting. Draft minutes from the most recent meeting and pertinent documents are posted on the SJRMP website at:

<http://www.dpla.water.ca.gov/sjd/sjrm/index.html>

### **Letter of Support Review Process**

Tim Ramirez, Calfed Bay-Delta Authority, discussed the letters of consistency process. It can be found online at:

<http://www.dpla.water.ca.gov/sjd/sjrm/documents/approvalprocess.html>. The last round of letters of consistency; lots of comments were received during review. Some of the comments were not fully addressed, so the letters were not sent as final and remained as draft. Ramirez wanted to know what we could do differently. SJRMP can either continue with the current process or change it.

Mario Santoyo, FWUA, thought that the process needed to be revisited. His concern was that there appeared to be little involvement with local stakeholders and that the final decision was administrative rather than based on a SJRMP consensus. He was also concerned about how closely we are following the process as outlined on the web site. Ramirez noted that the letters of consistency were more about coordination with proposed projects and consistency with SJRMP efforts. SJRMP's role is not deciding whether a project gets funded, but whether it's consistent with SJRMP goals and principles. Paula Landis, DWR, reminded the group that SJRMP is an open forum and we value the exchange of information with groups that are proposing projects on the San Joaquin River. SJRMP provides an opportunity to learn about, and provide input to proposals that we might not otherwise hear about. Rhonda Reed, CBDA, reminded the group that under the original SJRMP goals, supported projects must not have third-party impacts and that SJRMP can provide the input to identify those impacts. Ramirez feels that letters of consistency can provide Calfed and other grant providers an indication of the level of local involvement and communication that local groups have developed in their projects. SJRMP benefits from the information provided by grant applicants when they request letters of consistency.

Ramirez would like the group to review the SJRMP goals and principles and the draft MOU. Santoyo, Steve Chedester, and Monty Schmitt agreed to review the process with Ernie Taylor and revise or clarify the letters of consistency process. The subcommittee will report back to the group with their recommendations at the next meeting.

### **DWR/Prop 13 Grant**

Landis provided a historical account of the past issues, problems, and coordination efforts from the NRDC/FWUA restoration plan development. There have been two products released associated with this project that were funded by Prop 13 and other funding sources: the Background Report, and the Water Supply Study. The Restoration Strategies Report was scheduled to be released to the public, but was held up due to a breakdown in negotiations between FWUA and NRDC. DWR, USBR, FWUA, NRDC and now DFG are currently trying to salvage the report, so that the wealth of information collected can be released to the public. Millions of tax dollars have been spent on these studies, and the agencies have a moral obligation to finish this work and make it available to the public. The process repeatedly came close to closure, but there have been legal, financial, and administrative complications. Additionally there are strict guidelines for the spending Prop 13 moneys. The agencies have reviewed the report and believe it can be released within 4 – 6 months.

Bill Loudermilk discussed the California Department of Fish and Game's involvement with the restoration plan. Initially, DFG was not involved because of the confidentiality of the project, but has since reviewed the draft Strategies Report and feel that it provides good science that can serve as building blocks for future work. The Strategies Report is not a plan but can provide a reference to help develop a plan. There are lots of technical tools that were developed that can provide long term value.

Valerie Curley announced that on May 31, 2004 the FWUA/USBR will release a plan of action to define an approach to fill in current data gaps and bring together organizations that are key to obtaining this information. The Plan will list the short falls, and the tools to getting data.

### **California Bay-Delta Authority's San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning, California Water Plan Update, and SJRMP**

DWR has a new director, Lester Snow, and he is committed to work with the California Bay-Delta Authority on developing coordination efforts throughout the State. Currently, DWR and CBDA are preparing regional descriptions for Bulletin 160 "The California Water Plan", to help facilitate coordination efforts. CBDA has already filled regional coordinator positions in other regions, but so far the San Joaquin regional coordinator position is still open. The CBDA is going to write a job description and hire somebody to fill that role. Ramirez will give an update at the next meeting.

## **Ag Waiver Status and Update**

Pete Osmolovsky, Regional Water Quality Control Board, presented an update on the Ag Waiver Program. He provided SJRMP with a box of "Irrigated Lands Waiver" brochures that outlines the program. (The box is now in Amanda's possession if you would like some brochures please contact her at (559) 230-3307). The brochure is available in a PDF format online at:

[http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/news/brochures/docs/agwaiver\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/news/brochures/docs/agwaiver_brochure.pdf)

The RWQCB is a State agency with the authority to protect the quality of the waters of the State. Surface waters include waters in public and private channels and in natural and constructed waterways. Under the California Water Code, discharges from irrigated lands require either a Waste Discharge Permit or a Conditional Waiver to be issued from the RWQCB. Growers in the Central Valley who have irrigation return water and/or stormwater runoff leaving their croplands are under this regulation. Examples of irrigated lands include irrigated pasture, cropland, nurseries, and managed wetlands. The discharger can join a coalition group and apply for a group waiver, apply for an individual discharge conditional waiver, or submit a complete application for a Waste Discharge permit. There are currently eight coalition groups (local entities to act on behalf of individual growers). A majority of coalition groups are irrigation/water districts. Since the cost to monitor irrigation discharges can be significant, joining a coalition group may help reduce costs to individual landowners.

Constituents regulated include anything that can affect water quality. Discharges can come from surface runoff (tailwater), operational spills, subsurface drainage, and stormwater runoff. The program requires a number of deliverables to demonstrate compliance with the regulations and provide a tool for communication to the Board. In conclusion, owners and operators that discharge directly or indirectly to surface waters of the State are required to follow these regulations.

## **San Joaquin River Resource Management Coalition Upper SJR Conceptual Restoration Plan**

Chris White, Central California ID, represented the RMC to inform SJRMP of the progress of the SJR Comprehensive Restoration Plan. They are currently working on Phase 2 of the restoration plan. The objective is to develop an "implementable" restoration plan to benefit the environment and human resources. The RMC began this project because the local landowners felt that they were left out of the planning of water storage plans, vegetation and restoration plans, and floodplain studies. The RMC is a grassroots land owner oriented group that is active in three counties Merced, Madera, and Fresno.

Phase 2 will integrate information from various sources on issues identified in Phase 1. In phase 2 they plan on convening an advisory committee of affected stakeholders (FWS, DWR, ACOE, landowners, etc.) that will compile/combine, refine, and screen Potential Desired Conditions; develop water supply and water need estimates; develop, refine, and screen restoration actions; develop restoration alternatives and

water needs for each; develop recommendations for an Implementation Plan; and develop an informational document summarizing results.

PDCs identified in Phase 1 were:

- Adequate flood protection for 100 year event
- New water needs met by new yield
- Water quality should be improved
- Groundwater supplies should be enhanced
- Water rights and property rights must be protected
- Sustainable native and sport fish populations
- Flows and habitats sufficient to support requirements for desired species
- Restore wetland and riparian plant communities

There was an open discussion about the PDCs reported from Phase 1. Water quality improvements will focus downstream from the RMC area, below the Merced River. There was concern about limiting the study to only new yield to meet water needs for restoration. The concern was that by only looking at new yield they are limiting the conclusions and that this would have implications to the final product. If new water is not achieved, what happens to the restoration plans? Other PDCs or issues may come up in the future that was not identified in the Phase 1 report, so everything should be looked at. There was a suggestion to open up the RMC advisory committee to include stakeholders downstream of the RMC area: Friant to the Merced River.

A public review will be planned after the release of the draft report. White reminded everyone that the RMC is a stakeholder group and the plan is based on the values of the RMC stakeholders.

**The Next Advisory Council Meeting:** is scheduled on Wednesday, June 16 at 9:00 am at the Stanislaus County Agricultural Center.

**ATTENDEES AT  
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING  
April 1, 2004**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
1	Shelly Abajian	Sen. Dianne Feinstein Direct-Cen. CA	(559) 485-7430	Shelly_Agajian@feinstein.senate.gov
2	Gary Bobker	TBI	(415) 506-0150	bobker@bay.org
3	Steve Chedester	San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors	(209) 827-8616	schedgster@sbcglocal.net
4	Bob Childs	Corps of Engineers	(916) 557-7831	Robert.O.Childs@usace.army.mil
5	Ann Chrisney	RHTV	(916) 329-7458	achrisney@prbo.org
6	Valerie Curley	USBR-Fresno	(559) 487-5255	vcurley@mp.usbr.gov
7	Eric Gillies	CASLC	(916) 574-1897	gilliee@slc.ca.gov
8	Charlie Kratzer	USGS	(916) 278-3076	ckratzer@usgs.gov
9	Paula Landis	DWR	(559) 230-3310	plandis@water.ca.gov
10	Bill Loudermilk	DFG	(559) 248-2887	wlouderm@dfg.ca.gov
11	Pete Osmolovsky	RWQCB	(559) 445-6086	osmolovsky@rb5f.swrcb.ca.gov
12	Amanda Peisch	DWR	(559) 230-3307	apeisch@water.ca.gov
13	Jason Phillips	USBR	(916) 978-5033	
14	Tim Ramirez	CBDA	(916) 445-7690	TimR@calwater.ca.gov
15	Rhonda Reed	CBDA	(916) 445-0781	rreed@calwater.ca.gov
16	Mario Santoyo	FWUA	(559) 799-0701	msantoya@fwua.org
17	Monty Schmitt	NRDC	(415) 777-0220	mschmitt@nrdc.org
18	Kevin Shakespeare	Congressman Devin Nunes	(559) 323-5235	Kevin.Shakespeare@mail.house.gov
19	Ernie Taylor	DWR	(559) 230-3352	etaylor@water.ca.gov
20	Chris White	CCID/RMC	(209) 826-1421	ccidwhite@sbcglobal.net
21	Carolyn Yale	US EPA	(415) 972-3482	yale.carolyn@epa.gov